

## Procurement Clerks

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### Nature of the Work

Procurement clerks compile requests for materials, prepare purchase orders, keep track of purchases and supplies, and handle inquiries about orders. Usually called *purchasing clerks*, or *purchasing technicians*, they perform a variety of tasks related to the ordering of goods and supplies for an organization and make sure that what was purchased arrives when scheduled and meets the purchaser's specifications.

Automation is having a profound effect on the occupation. Orders for goods can now be placed electronically when supplies are low. For example, computers integrated with cash registers at stores record purchases and automatically reorder goods when supplies reach a certain target level. However, automation is still years away for many firms and the role of the procurement clerk is unchanged in many organizations.

There is a wide range of tasks performed by procurement clerks and a wide range of responsibilities. Some clerks may act more like buyers, particularly at small to medium-sized companies, while others perform strictly clerical functions. In general, procurement clerks process requests for purchases. They first determine if there is any product left in inventory and may go through catalogs or to the Internet to find suppliers. They may prepare invitation-to-bid forms and mail them to suppliers or distribute them for public posting. Once suppliers are found, they may interview the suppliers to check on prices and specifications and put together spreadsheets with price comparisons and other facts about each supplier. Upon approval of a supplier, purchase orders are prepared, mailed, and recorded into computers. Procurement clerks keep track of orders and determine the causes of any delays. If the supplier has questions, clerks try to answer them and resolve any problems. When the shipment arrives, procurement clerks may reconcile the purchase order with the shipment, making sure they match, notify the vendors when invoices not received, and make sure the bills concur with the purchase orders.

Some purchasing departments, particularly in small companies, are responsible for overseeing the organization's inventory control system. At these organizations, procurement clerks monitor in-house inventory movement and complete inventory transfer forms for book-keeping purposes. They may keep inventory spreadsheets and place orders when materials on hand are insufficient.



*Procurement clerks prepare purchase orders and make sure the shipment and the bills agree with the order.*

### Employment

In 2000, procurement clerks held about 76,000 jobs. Procurement clerks are found in every industry, including manufacturing, retail and wholesale trade, healthcare, and government.

### Job Outlook

Employment of procurement clerks is expected to decline through 2010 as a result of increasing automation. The need for procurement clerks will be reduced as the use of computers to place orders directly with suppliers—called electronic data interchange—and as ordering over the Internet—known as “e-procurement”—become more commonplace. In addition, procurement responsibilities are gradually being decentralized within organizations and are increasingly being performed in the originating departments by managers or by a designated employee. These departments may be issued procurement cards, which are similar to credit cards, that enable a department to charge purchases up to a specified amount.

Although employment in the occupation is expected to decline, job openings will occur for qualified individuals as workers transfer to other occupations or leave the labor force. Persons with good writing and communication skills, along with computer skills, will have the best opportunities for employment.

### Sources of Additional Information

Information on employment opportunities for procurement clerks is available from local offices of the State employment service.

(See the introductory statement on financial clerks for information on working conditions, training requirements, and earnings.)

## Tellers

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### Nature of the Work

The teller is the person most people associate with a bank. Tellers make up 25 percent of bank employees, and conduct most of a bank's routine transactions. Among their responsibilities are cashing checks, accepting deposits and loan payments, and processing withdrawals. They also may sell savings bonds, accept payment for customers' utility bills and charge cards, process necessary paperwork for certificates of deposit, and sell travelers' checks. Some tellers specialize in handling foreign currencies or commercial or business accounts.

Being a teller requires a great deal of attention to detail. Before cashing a check, a teller must verify the date, bank name, identification of the person to receive payment, and legality of the document. They also must make sure that written and numerical amounts agree and that the account has sufficient funds to cover the check. The teller then must carefully count cash to avoid errors. Sometimes a customer withdraws money in the form of a cashier's check, which the teller prepares and verifies. When accepting a deposit, tellers must check the accuracy of the deposit slip before processing the transaction.

Prior to starting their shift, tellers receive and count an amount of working cash for their drawer. A supervisor, usually the head teller, verifies this amount. Tellers use this cash for payments during the day and are responsible for its safe and accurate handling. Before leaving, tellers count cash on hand, list the currency-received tickets on a balance sheet, make sure the accounts balance, and sort checks and deposit slips. Over the course of a workday, tellers also may process numerous mail transactions. Some tellers replenish cash drawers and corroborate deposits and payments to automated teller machines (ATMs).